Slavery inconſiſtent with the Spirit of Chriſtianity.

A

SERMON

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SERMON, &c.

LUKE x. 18.

THE LORD HATH SENT ME—TO PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES.

JEHOVAH hath ſent me to proclaim liberty to captives[a]. It is not neceſſary to be a captive to diſcover the worth of ſuch a declaration as this: it is ſufficient to be a ſpectator of captivity.

The Jews ſuffered by the fate of war ſeveral captivities; and in that which is called the Babylonian[b] a foreign victor reduced between twenty and thirty thouſand free citizens to a condition of ſlavery[c]. The king, only in the nineteenth year of his age when faults deſerve pity more than blame, was ſtripped of all the enſigns of his dignity, and put in chains. His mother in the decline of life, and his wives in the bloom of it, all unadorned, diſtinguiſhed only by depreſſion of ſpirits, and dejection of countenance, ſhared his cruel reverſe of fortune. His officers civil and military,

[a] Iſai. lxi. 1. [b] 2 Kings xxiv. 10. Jer. lii.

his craftſmen and artificers followed in train, and all at the will of the conqueror went into the hopeleſs condition of ſlaves, ſome to priſon, ſome to unproductive ſervitude, and ſome to death. No humane ſpectator of ſuch a complicated calamity can help feeling a juſt indignation at the tyrant mixing with compaſſion for the ſlaves: for what had the king of Babylon to do with the ſins of the Jews?

A proclamation of liberty to captives, then, meets the wiſhes of both ſufferers and ſpectators, and grates only on the ears of a tyrant who makes ſlaves, and maſters who hold them in ſervitude. Such is the declaration of the text, and only one circumſtance obſcures the glory of it. When a Cyrus publiſhes his reſolution to liberate captives, the world inſtantly gives him credit for ſincerity, and applauſe for his generoſity: but the text is the language of Jeſus, a poor man. This, however, in the preſent caſe, is no objection; becauſe if a poor man can diſcover a method by which the juſt maxims of a monarch, which are only local and temporary, may be rendered univerſal and perpetual, his birth and ſtation are of no conſequence, his wiſdom is all in all, and his language is reputed, as it ought to be, the voice of nature, the reaſon of all mankind. The fact is: Jeſus was a man, and the friend of man, and the propoſal in the text was not the inefficient wiſh of an ordinary citizen, but the ſober plan of one, who knew how to carry his deſign into effect. He did not, indeed, enliſt armies, appoint generals, or even acquaint monarchs with his intention: he did not immediately remonſtrate againſt the injuſtice of ſlaveholders, nor did he rouſe the paſ-

ſions

ſions of their ſlaves: but he informed a few diſintereſted lovers of mankind of a few facts, which he foreſaw would make their way, and ſlowly but certainly ſubvert the whole ſyſtem of ſlavery; facts which, whenever the ſlaveholder ſhould come to know them, would compel him by his own convictions to releaſe his ſlave; and facts, which as ſoon as the ſlave ſhould comprehend, would prepare him to bear an advance from the ſervile condition of a beaſt into the dignity of a man.

Let us ſelect from the goſpel of Jeſus three doctrines, and let us addreſs the firſt to a ſlave apart: the ſecond to a ſlaveholder apart: and the third to both maſters and ſlaves: and, although it be in this ſtage of the buſineſs mere theory, yet let us examine what practice, if there be no unforeſeen obſtacles, the theory muſt naturally produce.

The Lord Jeſus taught the dignity of *man* as an intelligent and immortal being: a true fact, but till then wholly unknown to ſlaves, and very imperfectly, if at all, to their maſters. He addreſſed men as capable of knowing and enjoying intellectual pleaſures, and he reported facts naturally adapted to excite and exerciſe the latent powers of the mind. He ſhewed that man muſt live in a future ſtate to reap the reward of his virtues, or to ſuffer the puniſhment of his crimes. He ſpoke of him as a creature of worth, and according to his eſtimate a ſingle ſoul is of more value than a whole world of unintelligent matter. It is natural to ſuppoſe that a ſlave informed of the dignity of his nature muſt riſe in value in his own account, become in his own eyes a man of natural conſequence equal with his lord, and feel himſelf inſpired with that noble pride of nature which diſtinguiſhes and dignifies

nifies the free. From under the depreſſion of ſlavery, having heretofore known no more of himſelf than of his maſter's camel, that he had ſenſual appetites, the ſlave ſhould ſeem to ſtruggle into new exiſtence, aſpire to the diſtinctions of a man, the pleaſures of an intelligent being, the joy of knowing God, the practice of virtue, and the proſpect of immortality. In abſolute ſervitude a man hath every thing to fear and nothing to hope, and his ſpirits ſink, till, having no proſpect, and no uſe for hope, his ſenſual appetites at the ſame time continuing to employ him, he forgets his dignity, and ceaſes to reaſon like a man: but by admitting the fact taught by Jeſus Chriſt, the ſoul of this ſunken ſlave takes a contrary direction, riſes ennobled into its proper ſtate, and enters firſt on the felicity of ſpeculating moral excellence, then proceeds to the pleaſure of doing good, and next advances to the delight of proſpect, where no bounds are ſet to the eye, and where bliſs extends beyond all he can aſk, or think.

Jeſus taught the true character of *God:* that there was a God: that there was but one: that he was a Father and the univerſe his family: that his care extended over all his works, the moſt inconſiderable creatures not excepted: that he compaſſionated the moſt wretched, and was ready to forgive the moſt wicked: that a return to duty was a return to mercy: and that eternal glory was the reward of as many as copied his wiſe and juſt adminiſtration, for he was a *Father in heaven, who made his ſun to riſe on the evil and the good, and ſent his rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt:* that in a future ſtate he would call all men to account, and admit of no diſtinctions except thoſe of juſt and unjuſt:

unjuſt: that juſtice he would eternally protect, and injuſtice for ever puniſh. The ſyſtem of a ſlaveholder is a contraſt to all this: his government is not founded in juſtice: his maxims of obtaining and employing, rewarding and puniſhing his fellow creatures, far from tending to equalize, introduce, and ſupport the moſt horrible of all diſtinctions, and of three equal men make one an abſolute ſlave, a ſecond an inhuman taſk maſter, and the third a lawleſs tyrant above controul. Bring this ſtately ſlaveholder acquainted with the Supreme Being, more maſter of him than he of his ſlave: enlighten his mind with the knowledge of God, and it ſhould ſeem the moment he approves of the divine perfections he muſt abhor his own depravity, bluſh at his diſſimilitude to the original beauty, and caſt about in his mind how to reſtore his ſlaves to their juſt and natural rights.

Jeſus taught the nature and the indiſpenſible neceſſity of *holineſs*. In his goſpel holineſs is in general conformity to God, to *God* and not to rites and ceremonies; *be ye the children*, the reſemblances *of your Father:* and in particular it is the poſſeſſion of ſuch diſpoſitions as conſtitute order, and are neceſſarily productive of happineſs. *Happy are the* rich, the powerful: No: Happy are *the pure in heart*; happy are the humble; happy are the mild; happy are the merciful, for thoſe ſhall *ſee God*, and theſe ſhall *obtain mercy*. The doctrine of Jeſus is: that ſuch a ſimilarity to God is abſolutely neceſſary to the hope of pleaſing and enjoying him: that it is impoſſible to ſubſtitute any thing in its ſtead: that without this conformity all pretenſions to the character of Chriſtian are deluſive and vain, frauds which may be a while concealed,

cealed, but which impartial juſtice muſt in the end expoſe to the eternal glory of the rectitude of God, and to the everlaſting diſgrace of wicked men. Such doctrine, addreſſed to a company of ſlaves and ſlaveholders, it ſhould ſeem, muſt convince the maſter that the connection between ſhewing mercy and obtaining mercy is juſt and natural, that if he ſhewed no mercy he ought not to hope for any; and the ſlave that to be good is the nobleſt end of being free.

Theory ſays: tidings ſuch as theſe, committed by Jeſus to his diſciples to be publiſhed to *every creature* in all *nations*, ought, aſſuredly, to produce effects when they reach the ears of ſlaves [d]. They actually did ſo, and ſlaves became members of the firſt Chriſtian churches.

Let us follow this doctrine into a land of ſlavery in order to diſcover the operation of it in the minds and manners of the inhabitants. In Attica alone, it is ſaid, there were only twenty or thirty thouſand freemen, and they held in ſervitude four hundred thouſand ſlaves. Every Chriſtian teacher went to proclaim liberty to theſe captives: but this in ſuch a country was a moſt difficult and delicate enterprize. It originated in juſtice, and was replete with mercy: but where human depravity hath arrived at a certain pitch, to introduce juſtice and mercy is the moſt hard and hopeleſs of all undertakings. Slaves are the wealth of their maſters, and to emancipate them is to transfer their property. Slaves keep up the rank of their maſters, and to elevate the one is to degrade the other claſs. The execution, therefore, of the Saviour's plan,

[d] Mark xvi. 15. Mat. xxviii. 19.

required

required the prudent application of wiſe and well judged meaſures ſo as not to injure private property, not to diſturb civil order, not to expoſe Chriſtianity to the ſcandal of ſedition, not to obſcure the glory of a kingdom *not* of this world, and yet ſo as to procure effectual deliverance to captives, ample indemnity to their maſters, and ſuperior advantages to ſtates. If a given number of ſlaves be an equal number of enemies, the ſtate gains by the emancipation of them; and if the conſcious rectitude of the action be an ample indemnity to him who makes reſtitution of unjuſt gain, the maſter is indemnified when he makes the ſlave free.

It is granted, the caſe was difficult, but it is affirmed, the apoſtles were equal to the taſk, and the primitive Chriſtians under their prudent direction conducted the buſineſs ſo as to adorn the doctrine of their Saviour, and to demonſtrate the excellence of the Chriſtian religion. Three poſitions ſeem to contain the ſyſtem of the primitive churches in regard to ſlaves.

Firſt. The primitive Chriſtian ſlaveholders did not *force* their ſlaves to profeſs the Chriſtian religion. That ſome primitive Chriſtians were ſlaveholders is clear from this paſſage: Let as many ſervants as are under the yoke (theſe were ſlaves) count their own maſters worthy of all honour. And they that have *believing* maſters, let them not deſpiſe them becauſe they are brethren, but rather do them ſervice becauſe they are *faithful* and beloved, partakers of the benefit [c]. Philemon of Coloſſe was a maſter of this kind. He had a ſlave

[c] 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

named Oneſimus. This man defrauded his maſter, quitted his ſervice, and fled to Rome. There by ſome means he became acquainted with Paul, who inſtructed him, and either baptized him, or cauſed him to be baptized into the profeſſion of a Chriſtian. Then he returned him to his maſter with a letter, of which theſe words are a part: I beſeech thee for *my ſon* Oneſimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds[f]. The power of Philemon over his ſlave had always been abſolute, but it was Paul, not Philemon, who initiated Oneſimus, for converſion was then conſidered an effect of argument, and not of dominion. On this account the apoſtle called Oneſimus his *ſon*, for by baptiſm he had brought him into the Chriſtian world.

Even Pagan maſters did not force their ſlaves to profeſs Paganiſm: on the contrary, they thought their preſence polluted the worſhip. It was for very different reaſons that Pagans and Chriſtians did not force ſlaves to profeſs religion, and when the apoſtles exhorted Chriſtian ſlaves to count their Pagan maſters *worthy of all honour*, perhaps this might be one reaſon, they left their ſlaves to their own reflections in matters of religion, and they might be proſelytes of Moſes, or diſciples of Chriſt without incurring the diſpleaſure of their owners. Primitive Chriſtians entertained juſt notions of religion, and they wiſely avoided to adorn it with the vain glory of popularity by forcing ſlaves to profeſs what they did not underſtand. To ſay the truth, the forcing of conſcience was alike unknown in thoſe times to Pagans and Chriſtians, and it was an invention of later ages:

[f] Phil. x.

whether

whether an honourable one I ſhall not now inquire, but leave to the conſideration of ſuch as admire it.

Secondly. A profeſſion of Chriſtianity was not a *title* to freedom in the firſt churches. A ſlave might hear, examine and believe the Chriſtian doctrine; he might be baptized, receive the Lord's ſupper, and enjoy the benefit of all Chriſtian inſtitutes; but he might not claim manumiſſion on *this* ground. An apoſtle ſpeaks decidedly on the ſubject. Let every man *abide* in the ſame calling wherein he was called [g]. Art thou called being a ſervant? Care not for it. Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein *abide with God* [h]. This explains the language of the ſame apoſtle to Philemon concerning Oneſimus. Perhaps he therefore departed for a ſeaſon, that thou ſhouldſt receive him *for ever* [i]: an expreſſion taken from the Jewiſh law of ſervitude. If the ſervant ſay, I will not go out free, then his maſter ſhall bore his ear, and he ſhall ſerve him *for ever* [k], that is for life. The primitive Chriſtians then did not affix manumiſſion to profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and they acted wiſely, for it would have degraded religion from its dignity, temporal reward being only a more pleaſing kind of force. In theſe pure churches there were neither puniſhments nor bribes.

Yet, thirdly, Chriſtianity is, as an apoſtle calls it, *a perfect law of liberty* [l], and its natural and genuine produce is univerſal juſtice, or, which is the ſame thing, univerſal freedom. In proof of this let us ſtep into thoſe primitive aſſemblies, and hear what the apoſtles ſaid to their converts.

[g] 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. [h] 1 Cor. vii. 20, &c. [i] Phil. xv. [k] Exod. xxi. 5, 6. [l] James i. 25.

Paul exhorted ſlaves to become free, if they could. Art thou called being a ſervant? Care not for it: but *if thou mayeſt be made free uſe it rather*[m]. A hint was all that prudence could allow on a ſubject ſo delicate, and it was equal to ſaying, Set a juſt value upon freedom, and obtain it as ſoon as by any lawful means you can.

To ſuch ſlaves as were under rigorous maſters, and had no proſpect of manumiſſion, Peter gave this advice: Servants, be ſubject to your maſters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering *wrongfully*. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye ſhall take it patiently? but if when ye do well and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God[n]. Theſe were ſlaves ſubject to buffeting, or corporal puniſhment: but this is not an approbation of ſlavery, for the apoſtle complains of *wrong*, and his advice to the ſlave to be patient is applicable to this only as to one of many caſes of affliction and oppreſſion. Hence we reaſon, that the apoſtles diſapproved of ſlavery, and that their advice to Chriſtian ſlaves amounted to this: Get free if you can; but if you cannot, reflect on the wiſdom of providence and bear the oppreſſion of your tyrants with patience.

Let us imagine a primitive aſſembly of Chriſtian ſlaveholders and ſlaves, *not now*, in this inſtance, *as ſlaves, but above ſlaves, brethren beloved in the Lord*[o], all ſitting at the ſame table, eating the ſame bread, drinking the ſame cup, in remem-

[m] 1 Cor. vii. 21. [n] 1 Pet. ii. 18, &c. [o] Phil. xvi.

brance

brance of their common benefactor, who had said, *The Lord sent me to preach deliverance to captives.* Let us hear Paul commending charity, or universal benevolence. He describes it literally, and prizes it above the faith of miracles, above the gift of tongues, above the distribution of alms, above the glory of martyrdom. Earnestly covet the best gifts: and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way. The greatest of all gifts is charity [p]. He describes it figuratively: the same subject in colours. All the members of Christ are one body. By one spirit we were all *baptized* into one body, whether we be *bond* or free. God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him, but the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you; for if one member *suffer* all the members suffer with it, or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Could the bond, or could the free, hear, believe, and feel such discourses delivered by a Paul, and not regulate their actions by them? How must a slaveholder feel, when in the assembly a charitable deacon proclaimed: *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them* [q]? The doctrines and the ceremonies of Christianity attack injustice and cruelty in their strong holds, depraved passions, and consequently if a slave trade be the effect of such passions our religion goes to subvert the whole system of slavery. Feel its influence, and the work is done.

Let us go a step further. After the decease of the apostles, Christians understood that the liberating of slaves was a part of Christianity, not in-

[p] 1 Cor. xiii. 1, &c. [q] Heb. xiii. 2.

deed

deed expreſſed in the direct words of a ſtatute, but naturally and neceſſarily contained in the doctrines and precepts of it: in the precepts which equalized all, and in the firſt principle of all doctrines, the equal love of God to all mankind. In the centuries before the eſtabliſhment of a profeſſion of Chriſtianity, the Chriſtians who denominated themſelves Catholicks, and who afterwards coaleſced with the ſtate, were the leaſt enlightened, and the moſt depraved of all the diſciples of Jeſus, and the Africans were the loweſt order of theſe Catholicks: yet even the Africans thought it a Chriſtian duty to liberate ſlaves. There is a letter of Cyprian of Carthage yet extant on this ſubject. Some Numidian biſhops wrote him an account of the captivity of ſome Chriſtians. The letter fetched tears from his eyes. He repreſented the caſe to the church, and he collected a conſiderable ſum of money for the redemption of the ſlaves. Along with the ſum he ſent the letter juſt mentioned, containing ſeveral Chriſtian reaſons for redeeming captives, of which this is one: If Jeſus at the laſt day will reward ſome, ſaying, I was *ſick* and ye *viſited* me, ſurely he will more abundantly reward others, to whom he may juſtly ſay, *I was a captive, and you ſet me free.*

Perhaps I may be allowed to hazard a conjecture, for this is not the place for critical inveſtigation. It ſeems to me, that the Africans, who firſt invented infant-baptiſm, intended by it only to ſave children from ſacrifice or ſlavery. Before the time of Cyprian, that is, before the middle of the third century, if there were any debate concerning the baptiſm of infants, it was the baptiſm of infants in *law*, minors, not natural infants. Primitive Chriſtians

tians made conſcience of cloſely copying the life of Chriſt. He was baptized when he began to be about *thirty* years of age, and it was a queſtion of great conſequenee to the credit of Chriſtianity, whether a youth ought to be ſuffered to enter by baptiſm into a Chriſtian church, and to lay himſelf under obligations for life, before he arrived at years of legal diſcretion, or was allowed by law to diſpoſe of himſelf: but in Africa, in the time of Cyprian, the baptiſm of an infant meant the baptiſm of a new-born babe. Every body knows that the Carthaginians were a colony from Tyre: that the Moloch of Tyre was the Saturn of Carthage: that the barbarous worſhippers of this demon ſacrificed children to him in flames of fire: that they purchaſed infants as the Jews did turtle doves for ſacrifice: that to ſupply the markets with ſacrifices and ſlaves parents ſold their children, thieves ſtole them, and fighting parties ſubdued and carried off whole families; and that it was not in the power of the Roman emperors themſelves for ſeveral centuries, if at all, to put an end to this horrible practice of ſacrificing human beings.

Among ſuch monſters one Fidus taught what little he knew of Chriſtianity, and it is highly probable, for reaſons not admiſſible here, that he hit on the method of ſaving the lives and liberties of the lambs of his flock, by prevailing on their parents to let him dedicate them to the one living and true God by baptiſm, as the Jews had dedicated their's by circumciſion, and by putting them under the protection of ſome reputable ſponſors. The Africans did not then believe original ſin, and Cyprian and his colleagues in council approved of the baptiſm of infants by Fidus, becauſe they thought

thought the Son of man came not to deſtroy men's *lives* but to ſave them. The Africans then, and long after, called baptiſm *ſalus*, and they baptized children *pro ſalute*, to which words no Pagan Roman or Roman provincial had ever affixed the *Chriſtian* idea of ſalvation. If this were the caſe: if Fidus, pitying the ſmiling tawny or jetty babes at their mother's breaſts, baptized them for *the ſafety* of their lives and liberties, leſt their ill-informed parents, long accuſtomed to do evil, ſhould ſell them: Fidus ought to be honoured as a benefactor to mankind, and the blame of diverting a Chriſtian inſtitute from its original deſign goes over from him to others, who in other countries imitated his conduct without any imaginable worthy motive for doing ſo. The earlieſt council in Spain diſcovered a ſomewhat ſimilar humanity to ſlaves by enjoining a penance of ſeven years for killing a ſlave by deſign, and five for cauſing the death of one by accident. The moſt depraved Chriſtians, therefore, in the primitive ages, were not ſo depraved as to imagine that barbarity and ſlavery, inſeparable twins, could be conſiſtent with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity.

To proceed. In later times, in thoſe which are called the middle ages, it is clear, the emancipation of ſlaves was conſidered as the natural effect of Chriſtian principles. This is a voluminous ſubject full of various information, all tending to prove to the honour of Chriſtianity that it contributed more than any thing elſe in the world to emancipate ſlaves, to improve ſociety, and to refine the manners of mankind: but a hint muſt ſuffice here.

We have heard much of the decline of the Roman empire, and we have been told Chriſtianity

was the principal cauſe of the diſaſter. We reſpect the Roman empire. It was a fabrick of magnificence, one of the nobleſt efforts of the human mind. The Romans would be maſters, but they were the beſt abſolute maſters in the world: however, let not ſplendour ſtrike reaſon blind; the genius of Rome was love of dominion, the means often of obtaining it were factions in the ſenate, ſtanding armies in the field, the depopulation of one province, the captivity of another, the reduction of millions to an unconditional dependence on the will of one. True it is, barbarous nations, as they are called, ruſhed into the empire, broke up the mighty maſs of ancient deſpotiſm, and crumbled one into many independent ſtates: but who will pretend to deny that, on the whole, order proceeded out of this confuſion, and the weſtern world in general became more, and more rationally free. This was the declaration of ſeveral at the time, and it is very credible for many reaſons both of theory and experiment. The revolution was a loſs to Rome, but a gain to the world, a diminution of imperial dignity, but an increaſe of human liberty. However it were, this is certain: the new ſtates allowed a liberty of conſcience to freemen, which too many Chriſtian emperors had denied, and one of their firſt kings, for Chriſtian reaſons, paid large ſums for the redemption of captives. The Vandals in Africa, the Wiſigoths, or Weſtern Goths, in Spain, the Oſtrogoths in Italy, the Franks in Gaul, and other nations of the ſame ſtock had juſt notions of civil and religious liberty, and kept men in bondage only till it became ſafe to ſet them free, always holding it conſiſtent with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity to emancipate ſlaves. Even after

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their coalition with papal Rome, monarchs graced the birth of a prince with a manumiſſion of ſlaves. Monks purchaſed children to educate, and by aſſociating them in their order made them free. The church freed many by ordaining them to office. Founders transferred their ſlaves with their lands to eccleſiaſtical bodies, which improved their condition, although it did not abſolutely ſet them free. Dying perſons ordered by will the emancipation of their ſlaves: and all charters and deeds of manumiſſion, though mixed with ſuperſtitious notions, aſſigned Chriſtian reaſons, and every body underſtood that the liberating of a ſlave was a good work, in the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and highly acceptable to Almighty God.

Let us come home to our own country. Our firſt known anceſtors, the Britons, were wild and free, but dupes to the barbarous uſages of Druidical ſuperſtition. They fought, they made captives, they burnt them in baſkets to the honour of their gods. The Romans, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans by various revolutions reduced many to ſlavery, and none of them attempted to diſtribute univerſal freedom. Slavery in a ſtate is a deep-rooted obſtinate evil, and love of dominion is a diſpoſition that thrives too well in the hearts of depraved men. Conquerors will be maſters, captives muſt be ſlaves. So lately as the firſt year of Edward VI. a ſtatute degraded vagabonds into ſlaves. The act ſays, "If *any* perſon ſhall bring to *two* juſtices of peace any run-nagate ſervant, or any *other* which liveth idly and loiteringly by the ſpace of *three* days, the ſaid juſtices ſhall cauſe the ſaid idle and loitering ſervant or vagabond to be marked with an hot iron on the breaſt with the

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mark V. and adjudge him to be *ſlave* to the ſame perſon that brought or preſented him, to have to him, his executors or aſſigns, for *two* years after, who ſhall take the ſaid ſlave, and give him bread, water, or ſmall drink, and reffuſe meat, and cauſe him to work by beating, chaining, or *otherwiſe*, in ſuch work and labour as he ſhall put him unto, *be it never ſo vile:* and if ſuch ſlave abſent himſelf from his ſaid maſter, within the ſaid term of two years, by the ſpace of *fourteen* days, then he ſhall be adjudged by two juſtices of peace to be marked on the forehead, or the ball of the cheek, with an hot iron, with the ſign of an S. and further ſhall be adjudged to be ſlave to his ſaid maſter *for ever:* and if the ſaid ſlave ſhall run away the ſecond time, he ſhall be adjudged a *felon.* It ſhall be lawful to every perſon to whom any ſhall be adjudged a ſlave, to put a ring of *iron* about his neck, arm or leg." This act was repealed two years afterwards, but there was ſlavery in England before and after this period. In our publick records, there is a charter of Henry VIII[r]. enfranchiſing two ſlaves belonging to one of his manors; and there is a commiſſion from Queen Elizabeth with reſpect to the manumiſſion of certain bondmen belonging to her. There is in France a general law for the manumiſſion of ſlaves, and though there is no ſuch law in our ſtatute book, yet the genius of our conſtitution was ever abhorrent of ſlavery, and now pure and proper ſlavery is ſo effectually done away that a ſlave or negro, the inſtant he lands in England, becomes a freeman, and the law will protect him in the enjoyment of his perſon and property.

[r] Rymer.

Baptiſm is not neceſſary: to breathe Britiſh air is ſufficient. Perhaps the vulgar errour of liberating a ſlave by baptizing him came from Africa along with other African doctrines into the weſtern world.

Happy ſhould I be, if I could add, there is no ſlavery in our plantations, but, although it is unpleaſant to blame one's nation, yet we muſt ſay, and we ſay it with ſincere ſorrow, while we boaſt of freedom at home, and zealouſly oppoſe every attempt to diminiſh it, we annually reduce a people, who never injured us, to a ſervitude unmerited, unjuſt, and to an enormous degree barbarous, as well as diſgraceful to our country. We give the world leſſons of cruelty, and, as we are called Chriſtians, innocent Chriſtianity, guiltleſs of oppreſſion and blood, bears the ſcandal. The ſins of individuals are not puniſhed here, for this to them is only a ſtate of trial: but collective bodies ſubſiſt here in a ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, and if there be ſuch a thing as national ſin, that is it, aſſuredly, which the legiſlature makes its own. I fear, I fear, the African ſlave trade is of this kind.

Many plauſible arguments have been uſed to defend this traffick, but, to ſay the truth, they are all reducible to one, that is the *gain* of it. What then becomes of juſtice, juſtice the baſe of the throne of God [s], if ideas of gain and loſs be allowed to ſupply the place of notions of right and wrong? Gain is the reaſon of every wretch alive for every crime that he can commit. Why does the avaricious render himſelf deaf to the cries of all the afflicted? He ſaves by it. Why does he rob the fatherleſs, and oppreſs the widow? He gains by doing ſo.

[s] Pſal. xcvii. 2.

Whence

Whence the falſe weight, and the deceitful balance, the perpetual frauds of ſome, and the violent dealings of others? They are productive of money. The baſe aſſaſſin, why doth he plunge his execrable dagger into the heart of his benefactor? He hopes to profit by it. Let us never quit the ground of eternal, immutable juſtice, never imagine any thing right that allows the propriety of ſomething unjuſt and wrong.

I recollect an incident in the life of David. In the hearing of three of his military officers, he one day wiſhed for a little water of a certain ſpring. The Philiſtine troops were then in garriſon defending the fortification where the ſpring was. The officers of David broke through the hoſt of the Philiſtines, probably by killing ſome of the ſoldiers, and certainly at the hazard of their own valuable lives, took water of the ſpring, and returned with it to David. What did he? He took the water, but recollecting what they had hazarded to procure it, and very likely obſerving they had ſtained themſelves with human blood, the water had loſt its chryſtal in his eye, it ſeemed blood in the cup, he could not drink it, he poured it out with horrour, exclaiming as he looked up to the Parent of life, *My God forbid it me, that I ſhould do this thing: ſhall I drink the blood of theſe men, that have put their lives in jeopardy!*

I apply this to the preſent caſe. If more than four hundred thouſand men be held in perpetual ſlavery in the plantations: if near one hundred thouſand innocent perſons be annually reduced to ſervitude to ſupply the waſte: if corporal puniſhment, little leſs than flaying alive, be neceſſary to their degradation: if raw ſalting be neceſſary to

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their preſervation: if diſguſtful diet, if iron collars and brands in the fleſh, if hanging, beheading, ſtrangling, burning alive, ſetting heads and limbs on poles along the highway, if only a thouſandth part of the horrours attributed to this trade be neceſſary to it, who doth not ſee that commodities coming through ſuch hands are ſoaked in tears and ſtained with blood? Who doth not ſay with an apoſtle, *who is offended and I burn not*[t]*?* or with David, *My God forbid that I ſhould drink blood!*

Let us leave our negro brethren to the care of their heavenly Father, who will, without all doubt, ſome day make inquiſition for their blood: let us ſpeak of ourſelves. The ſlave-merchant proteſts he abhors injuſtice, and cruelty hath no place in his ſoul. Be it ſo. He is a Briton, we give him credit. A fact it is, intended or unintended, cruelty comes to paſs of courſe in this traffick, and it is impoſſible to conduct a ſlave trade without it. As far as ſome of you, my hearers, born free, and refined to perfection by rank, education, and commerce with the world, as far as you are ſuperior to negroes, ſo much better are you prepared to meet and ſuſtain with prudence an unavoidable ill. Suppoſe a foreign banditti of ſable ruffians in the night ſhould attack your houſe, handcuff your ſervants, plunder your property, ſeize your perſon, ſtrip your wife and children, and attempt to put you all in chains: Would you make no reſiſtance? But if you reſiſt, behold a plea for violence, wounds and death. If you ſhould fall a victim to ſuperior force, and find yourſelf and family on board a ſhip, beneath the hatches, deprived of liberty and light,

[t] 2 Cor. xi. 29.

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food friend and hope, are you ſure you ſhould have firmneſs enough to reſiſt the temptation of laying violent hands on your children, your wife, and yourſelf? If you could ſurmount this, and if you ſhould hereafter meet with a favourable opportunity to deſtroy your oppreſſor, could you help cleaving the barbarian aſunder, although your doing ſo would make you appear a ſavage to yourſelf? Would you avoid this, and try to regain your liberty by exciting mutiny in hope of bringing the hard heart of the tyrant to relent; could you prevent the effect of his deſperate rage, if he ſhould ſet fire to the powder on board and involve his world and all its inhabitants in one common deſtruction? Even a beaſt reſiſts, when you would tame him to your hand, and will man reſign his maſtery over himſelf without a ſtruggle? But if he ſtruggle, a conflict commences which never ends without tranſgreſſing the bounds of humanity and juſtice.

Sorry, very ſorry, I am to be obliged to ſay: human nature hath been affronted with the moſt brutal indignities in the perſons of negro ſlaves. They have been won and loſt by their wanton maſters at games of chance. When they have eſcaped, rewards have been offered for their heads, though he, who offers a price for blood, is guilty of felony. "I will give," ſays an advertiſing planter, "a reward of twenty pounds currency to whoever will apprehend the ſaid negro. I will give the ſame reward for his *head*[u]." I bluſh to tell, that even in London, ſo lately as the year ſeventy

[u] *Law of Retribution. By* GRANVILLE SHARP, Eſq; London, 1776, page 238. Carolina Gazette by Robert Wells, Dec. 30, 1774.

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two, an advertiſement appeared in the Gazetteer of the firſt of June for apprehending "An Eaſt India black boy about fourteen years of age, named" (I bluſh to relate this) "Pompey, having round his neck a braſs collar with a direction to a certain houſe[w]." Such well-atteſted facts (and they are nothing compared with what remain to be told) preclude the neceſſity of reflections in form; and I finiſh by addreſſing a few words to an aſſembly that hath not loſt the uſe of its reaſon.

Let us put our entire love of liberty out of all doubt to ourſelves by immediately entering into that freedom, which reaſon and revelation unite to recommend. Let our underſtandings put off prejudice, and lay themſelves open to rational conviction. Let our paſſions diſcard thoſe officious pretended friends, which if admitted will be maſters, pride, avarice, envy, revenge, love of eaſe, and paſſion for power. Let us aſſort our companions, and if we have no vices of our own, let us refuſe to be enſlaved by the vices of our acquaintance. Let our actions be juſt, open, manly, conformable to our own convictions, ſuch as become free, intelligent and immortal men. Let us reduce our wants within the limits of our own efforts. Above all, let us copy the life of Jeſus, for *If the Son make us free, we ſhall be free indeed.*

Have we children? Let us call them to our knee, and early inſpire them with the love of vir-

[w] Mr. SHARP, in his *Limitation of Slavery*, London, 1776, page 35, ſays, This "remarkable inſtance of tyranny came within my *own* knowledge.—I inquired after the author, and found that he was a merchant—who ſhall be nameleſs." The advertiſement ſays, the boy "was named [Bob or] Pompey."

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tuous freedom. Let us teach them the natural connection between civil and religious liberty, and the indiſpenſible obligation of foſtering both. Let us ſhew them where encroachments on natural rights begin, and whither they tend. Let us ſet before their eyes the ſad but inſtructive hiſtories of conſciences oppreſſed, property plundered, families divided, and flouriſhing ſtates ruined by exerciſes of arbitrary power. Let us thoroughly tincture them with the doctrine of Jeſus, that *God ſent his Son not to deſtroy men's lives but to ſave them.*

Let us, if we have domeſticks, baniſh rigour, adminiſter an œconomy of wiſdom and goodneſs, and always remember *we have a maſter*, a maſter not a tyrant, *in heaven*, a guide to us, and a guardian to our ſervants.

Finally. In all civil and political debates let us be always on the ſide of liberty, not of licentiouſneſs under the name, but of juſt, equal, and univerſal freedom. May we and our poſterity enjoy it under the ſanction of law! May other nations quickly recover or obtain it! May ſlaves receive it as ſoon as poſſible from their maſters, leſt the world ſhould applaud them in future for taking it by force! May all the earth become in due time, as from what hath been done we hope and believe it will, a temple of God, and all the inhabitants his wiſe and unconſtrained worſhippers! May we paſs, when we die, into that ſtate where the ſlave is free from his maſter, where there is no ſin, no ſorrow, no pain, no death, where God is all in all, and where glory honour and immortality will be to all, who after the example

of their divine maſter have had both the power and the will *to comfort thoſe that mourn, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to open the priſon to them that are bound.*

APPENDIX.

THIS diſcourſe, which attempts to ſhew that ſlavery is inconſiſtent with the genius of the Chriſtian religion, was compoſed leſs for the purpoſe of expoſing the iniquity of the African ſlave trade, than for that of vindicating the character of the primitive Chriſtians, or rather the credit of Chriſtianity itſelf, which is groſsly miſrepreſented when it is deſcribed as compatible with ſlavery. Slavery in every form is unjuſt and inhuman: but a Chriſtian religion in coalition with ſlavery is a mere creature of fancy. In vain apologiſts quote the inſtitutes of Moſes, and the practice of new teſtament churches, for it is not credible that a ſlave trade is founded either on reſpect for Judaiſm, or faith in Chriſt, or that reaſons for enſlaving mankind are recommended by a book in praiſe of redemption. The moſt glorious part of the hiſtory of the Jews is that of their aſſerting their liberty againſt the tyranny of Pharoah; and the uniform ſpirit of the new teſtament is, *Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the ſervants of men.*

War is the parent of ſlavery, and captivity is as ancient as Nimrod. This hero built a city, and called it Babel, which is a contraction of *Babbath-al*, or *Bab-al-ain*, the apple of God's eye. *Bab*, all over the eaſt, literally means the court of a prince, and it was perfectly conſiſtent with the genius of the eaſterns to aſſimilate ſuch a court to the *ain* or pupil of a beautiful eye. To this they affixed *al*, the name of God, which ſignified no more than that it was the moſt excellent of its kind. It was a divine pupil, *the beauty of the excellency of the Chaldees.* In this name the inhabitants and their kings boaſted. The ſame Nimrod built other cities, and one at leaſt with

turrets on the walls, probably for the confinement of captives. This was named *Ballel*, which literally ſignifies a confuſion, and figuratively a confuſion of *ſight*, owing to what is called a blood ſhot, or a *blemiſh in the eye*, and this apt figure was intended to expreſs what the early inhabitants of the eaſt thought of reſtraint and captivity. From that day to this ſucceſſive Nimrods have held all the eaſt in bondage, and their tyranny is a deformity that hath ever tarniſhed the beauty of oriental nature, and marred the elegance of Aſiatick art.

The Greeks boaſted of liberty: but what was Spartan liberty more than ariſtocratical licentiouſneſs? It becomes a Briton to think, that the celebrated Spartan government was a diſcipline founded on injuſtice, ſupported by cruelty, inimical to population and national wealth, incompatible with commerce, arts and ſciences, utterly deſtructive of freedom and virtue, and productive of the very worſt of all forms of deſpotiſm, an obſtinate ariſtocracy. Spartan freemen were all idle gentlemen, who were forbidden to till the ground, or practiſe any mechanical employment, and who ſpent all their time in hunting, dancing, feſtivals, amuſements or war. They conquered a people called Helots, and converted them all into ſlaves. They made an equal partition of lands among themſelves, and compelled the Helots to farm them for the owners. They called themſelves *the ſtate*, and they obliged the degraded Helots to perform the whole manual labour of the republick, and with unpardonable ingratitude and cruelty they aſſaſſinated them at their pleaſure. They compelled them to intoxicate themſelves, and play mad pranks, in order to teach their young maſters by contraſt ſobriety and genteel behaviour, and this brutal practice is quoted without any marks of indignation by ſome moraliſts. The barbarous practice of putting weakly children to death prevailed among themſelves. Their ſyſtem of education was a ſtring of abſurdities, and the whole tended to ſink the man in the ſoldier, and to annihilate domeſtick virtue under pretence of publick good. In return for all the advantages, which the pretended ſtate derived from the ſervices of the Helots, the army guarded the miſerable beings from foreign invaders,

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and protected them in the enjoyment of the bleſſings of abſolute ſlavery.

In ſome parts of Greece ſlaves were to maſters as ten to one, and in others as twenty to one. By an account taken at Athens at one time, it appeared that there were ten thouſand ſtrangers, twenty thouſand citizens, and four hundred thouſand ſlaves, and it was a ſimilar diſproportion that obliged maſters every where to render the condition of ſlaves moſt deplorable. They were bought, ſold, tamed, employed, beaten, mutilated, or deſtroyed exactly as beaſts were: and worſe than beaſts they were put to torture, and deprived of the means of defence leſt they ſhould endeavour to make themſelves free. The Greek ſlaveholders reduced the whole ſyſtem into one ſhort proverb, which paſſed from them to the Romans, *Tot hoſtes, quot ſervi*, and their hiſtory exemplified the adage, for ſlaves often mutinied, and the ſlaughter of a million hath been called the ſalvation of a ſtate.

The Romans maintained the ſame abſolute dominion over their ſlaves, and for the ſame reaſon. Hence it was that, when it was propoſed in the ſenate to diſtinguiſh ſlaves from freemen by a certain dreſs, a ſenator oppoſed the motion, becauſe he thought ſlaves, always too much inclined to deſtroy their maſters, would diſcover their own ſuperiority of number, and be tempted by it to reſiſt their lords, and ſubvert the ſtate. The wiſeſt of Pagans never imagined univerſal freedom, and the moſt juſt were ſo far from modern manners that they would be reputed barbarians now. When the ſlaves of the celebrated Cato had ſpent their lives in his ſervice, and became through age unable to work, Cato, that exact pattern of punctual Pagan juſtice, would not be at the charge of ſupporting them, but either turned them off to ſhift for themſelves, or ſuffered them to ſtarve to death in his own family. Yet Cato was not liable to be called to account by government; on the contrary, government protected him, and every other ſlaveholder, in the glorious right of ſtarving an old ſlave, or ſtabbing a young one.

Into this diſordered world, at a proper period, *God ſent forth*

forth his Son to proclaim liberty to captives: the TOTAL but not the immediate ABOLITION of the ſlave trade. Here two queſtions riſe to view: a queſtion of right, and a queſtion of fact. The queſtion of right is affirmed in the foregoing ſermon, and an attempt is made to prove that the enfranchiſement of ſlaves is one act of juſtice naturally proceeding out of evangelical doctrine. The queſtion of fact, Whether the Chriſtian ſlaveholders mentioned in the new teſtament did actually emancipate their ſlaves is rather ſuppoſed than proved. There are, however, ſome ſubſtantial evidences that the firſt Chriſtians did not traffick in ſlaves, and that they emancipated ſuch as they had at their converſion as ſoon as the condition of their affairs would permit. When ſlaves were ſo numerous, that one maſter had four hundred, another five thouſand, a third twenty thouſand, a fourth a multitude innumerable reſembling an army, it became wealthy Chriſtians, who probably were not of very high rank, and had not any conſiderable number of ſlaves, to act with all poſſible caution, and to unite prudence with benevolence. Had they annexed manumiſſion to baptiſm, undoubtedly, ſlaves would have accepted the condition, and two great evils would have followed: the church would have been a crowd of unprincipled men, who would have diſgraced the holy profeſſion by ignorance and profligacy; and the ſtate would have been juſtly alarmed, leſt Chriſtians ſhould arm ſlaves, ſubvert government, and ſet up a ſecular kingdom. It is a character to the goſpel that it was embraced by freemen, that in the hiſtory of its progreſs ſlaves ſeldom appear; that when they do it is without compulſion; that on embracing Chriſtianity they were admitted to full religious liberty; and that the manumiſſion of them was left to the diſcretion of the maſter to be effected as ſoon as poſſible without damage to religion, or giving umbrage to the ſtate. No other ſtate of the caſe accords with all the circumſtances of it.

Let any man examine the Greek and Roman maxims of managing ſlaves, and which, brutal as they are, are abſolutely neceſſary to render ſervitude ſafe. Then let him inquire whether a primitive diſciple of Jeſus could obſerve

obſerve theſe maxims. Could the mild and merciful Chriſtian aſſume the haughty air neceſſary to a ſlave-holder to keep his ſlave at proper diſtance, leſt he ſhould once ſuſpect himſelf of a ſpecies equal to his lord? Could a Chriſtian, who had been taught not to be angry with his brother without cauſe, not to reſiſt evil, to let his communication be yea, yea, nay, nay[t]: could he rate, revile, beat and torture his ſlave? yet ſlaves could not be managed to profit without all this. Could he, who was bound on peril of his deſtruction to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to harbour ſtrangers, to viſit the ſick and impriſoned[u], could he conſult his own worldly intereſt ſo as to neglect all theſe? yet on condition of performing all theſe kind offices ſlaves were not worth keeping. How then was it poſſible for primitive Chriſtians to buy ſlaves, or to hold them in hand?

To theſe general obſervations, one in particular may be added in proof that Chriſtian maſters actually got rid of ſlavery as faſt as by any prudent means they could. The firſt diſciples of Jeſus, drinking of the pure water of life at the ſpring-head, took no oaths, bore no arms, ſhed no human blood. A diſapprobation of war includes a deteſtation of captivity, the firſt fruit of war. They thought, wars and fightings originated in depraved paſſions. Their wiſdom was pure, peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocriſy[w], in perfect agreement with the ſecond great commandment, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

The truth is, there were almoſt from the beginning two ſorts of Chriſtians: the firſt, genuine diſciples of Jeſus, aimed only to form a *church*; the other meant to form a *ſtate*. Unhappily for the credit of religion the laſt ſucceeded, and introduced all the maxims of ſecular empires, rank and ſubordination, licentious inactivity and horrible ſlavery, oaths and arms, and the ſhedding of human blood, and ſo forced monachiſm upon reluctant nations under the name and in the place of Chriſtianity. Even theſe miſtaken Chriſtians have acknowleeged that it is

[t] Matt. v. [u] xxv. [w] James iv. 1, &c.

a part

a part of Chriſtianity to liberate ſlaves: but the other claſs, though they fell into diſgrace, and were diſtinguiſhed in different countries by many odious names agreeing only in this, that they were non-catholicks, retained the primitive faith and manners, and while they practically aſſerted their own freedom, taught the rights of all mankind.

Theſe two do not always go together, and, to omit other countries, France affords an example of the moſt pointed abhorrence of perſonal ſlavery at home, along with a code of colonial law eſtabliſhing on barbarous principles abſolute and perpetnal ſlavery in her plantations. It was in the year 1315 that Lewis X. iſſued an ordinance, which declared: That all mankind were by nature free-born: that many of the common people were held in ſervitude for the faults of their anceſtors: that the kingdom was called the kingdom of Franks: that the king, by the advice of his grand council, determined the fact ſhould accord with the name: and that therefore all ſlaves ſhould be enfranchiſed upon juſt and reaſonable conditions. The French lawyers do conſider this ordinance as putting a final period to ſlavery in France, but they do not allow that freedom originated in it: on the contrary, they affirm on the teſtimony of ancient and authentick writers that, although they know not the ſource of the privilege, which effaced the idea of pure ſlavery in France, yet they have full proof that the Franks were originally free: that they were none of them ſlaves: and that if any foreign ſlave entered the country crying *France and liberty*, the ſtate protected him in the enjoyment of freedom, ſo that his maſter could neither recover his original coſt, nor his future ſervice without his own conſent. They, therefore, regarded this ordinance as the reſtitution of an ancient allowed right, which later cuſtoms had violated. In 1571 a merchant of Normandy offered to ſale at Bourdeaux ſeveral Moors, but the parliament of Guienne by a ſolemn decree ſet them all at Liberty, becauſe France, the parent of liberty, did not allow any ſlavery in the kingdom. In the reign of Henry III. a Spaniſh man of war ran aſhore by diſtreſs of weather near Calais. The governour underſtanding

there

there were aboard two or three hundred Turks, Moors, and Barbarians, whom Spain had enſlaved by the fate of war, ſeized the ſlaves, and ſent them to the king at Chartres. There, as they had been inſtructed, they placed themſelves kneeling, and naked as they had been aboard, on the ſteps of the church to which the king was going to hear maſs. On his majeſty's arrival, in a tone which only diſtreſs can utter, they cried *miſericorde*, *miſericorde*. The king obſerved them, and after dinner aſſembled his council to deliberate; and neither the credit of the duke of Guiſe, who uſed all his intereſt, nor the memorial of the Spaniſh ambaſſador, who claimed the ſlaves for his court, and who urged the good underſtanding then ſubſiſting between the two crowns, and further, that accident, not deſign, had brought them to Calais, nor any other reaſons could prevail againſt the doctrine that no ſlavery could be endured for a moment in France, and the ſlaves were declared free. Soon after, they were ſhipped at Marſeilles for Conſtantinople, and every man was complimented with a crown-piece.

The black code, as it is called, or the royal edict for the government of negro ſlaves in the plantations, is dated Verſailles, 1685. It conſiſts of ſixty articles, of a few of which this is the ſubſtance. No negro ſlaves ſhall marry without the conſent of their maſters: the children of ſlaves belong to their maſters: no ſlave ſhall be ſuffered to carry any walking ſticks or offenſive arms, nor ſhall ſlaves of different maſters gather together in companies, night or day, under any pretence whatever, on pain of corporal puniſhment, in ſome caſes of impriſonment, in others of death: whatever a ſlave acquires by his own induſtry, or by the liberality of others, or by any other means, ſhall belong wholly to his maſter; and no perſon, ſlave or freeman, child or relation, ſhall be allowed to claim any ſhare, all promiſes and obligations of ſlaves being null and void, they having no power to diſpoſe of any thing: no ſlave ſhall be ſuffered to execute any publick office or commiſſion, or to negotiate any buſineſs, except for his maſter: he ſhall not be allowed to give evidence in any cauſe civil or criminal, and in caſe he be heard in evidence his depoſition ſhall not afford

any preſumption, conjecture, or ſhadow of proof, but ſhall be uſed only to direct the judges where evidence may be elſewhere found: no ſlave ſhall be a party in any civil or criminal proceſs for the reparation of outrages and exceſſes committed againſt ſlaves: if a ſlave ſhall ſtrike his maſter, or his maſter's wife, his miſtreſs, or their children, ſo as to fetch blood, or on the face, he ſhall be puniſhed with death; and all offences againſt freemen ſhall be ſeverely puniſhed, in ſome caſes with death: a fugitive ſlave ſhall, for the firſt time, have his ears cut off, and ſhall be marked on the ſhoulder with a flower de luce, for the ſecond he ſhall be hamſtrung, and marked with a flower de luce on the other ſhoulder, and for the third he ſhall be put to death: maſters ſhall not be allowed to torture or mutilate their ſlaves, but they may chain them, or beat them with rods or cords whenever they think their ſlaves deſerve correction: in general, ſlaves ſhall be accounted moveables, and ſhall be ſubject to the ſame laws as all the other chattels of their maſters. The lawyers of France obſerve that this is a code of ſlavery in form, and that the ſervitude of negroes in their colonies is nearly equal to that of Roman ſlaves.

Pains have been taken by many gentlemen to prove that there is no neceſſary connection between ſlavery and cruelty, and this may be true of a few domeſtick ſlaves: but whence, except from the neceſſity of the caſe, have all the laws and maxims of ancient and modern ſlave-government proceeded? Whence this uniform barbarity? The nerveleſs orientals, too idle to kill any thing elſe, behead and butcher ſlaves. The Greeks, though never famed for ſincerity, were always reputed liberal and polite, yet the Greeks tortured ſlaves. The high ſpirited republicans at Rome, who ſtabbed a Cæſar for attempting to make himſelf their maſter, were themſelves the moſt deſpotical of mankind to their ſlaves. The French, who were never reputed cruel, while they paid an enthuſiaſtical homage to liberty at home, governed their plantations with a rod of iron. Even Britain, juſt in her laws, and gentle in her manners, equal in her zeal for liberty, and more ſucceſsful in obtaining it than France, hath been alike inhuman in her colonial government of

ſlaves. Whence then could cruelty proceed but from a conviction that many ſlaves could not poſſibly be kept in order without it? It was extorted, as it always muſt be, by neceſſity. What except corporal puniſhment can be inflicted on a ſlave? Would you impriſon him? He is in confinement. Would you baniſh him? He is baniſhed. Would you fine him? He hath no property, his rags are not his own. Would you ſeparate him from his wife and children? They are his maſter's, not his. What remains? Only one thing: corporal puniſhment, which muſt be increaſed in proportion to his offences: cut off his ears for the firſt; cut the tendons of his hams and lame him in both legs for the ſecond; for the third kill him, and, if there be a God and a future ſtate, let him complain to him, and get redreſs if he can: but perhaps there will be no future ſtate, perhaps a negro hath no ſoul, perhaps, too, there is no God.

The African ſlave-trade hath long been a diſtreſs to individuals; and now, if a judgment may be formed by the numerous petitions which have been preſented to parliament, the general voice is for the TOTAL ABOLITION of it.

There is no difficulty in determining the nature of this trade: it is confeſſedly unjuſt; and the danger to the ſtate from the quantum of ſlavery in a plantation is not hard to gueſs. There is in Jamaica a tax or fine laid upon ſuch as keep fewer than three white to one hundred black ſervants, and it is ſaid there are in the iſland about thirty thouſand, perhaps, more whites, and one hundred and ſeventy thouſand negroes. Hence follows the neceſſity of ſeverity. In Barbadoes the diſproportion is leſs, if, as it is ſaid, the whites be twenty-two thouſand and the negroes only ſeventy-two thouſand. At St. Kitt's, the inhabitants are about forty thouſand, of whom thirty thouſand are blacks; and at Nevis the whites are reputed about two or three thouſand, and the negroes ſix thouſand.

Nor is there any difficulty in anſwering the argument taken from the ſuppoſed natural inferiority of the negroes. Perhaps this may not be true: and if it be, the clear con-

cluſion is, that the wiſe ought to protect and not oppreſs the weak.

It hath been affirmed, that the condition of the Africans on the ſlave coaſt is ſo wretched, that it is an act of mercy to tranſport them to the European plantations. Do the negroes think ſo? And have the planters any Omiah to ſend back with this good news to their countrymen?

The real difficulty lies in the immediate dependence of the plantations on the ſlave-trade, for in thoſe ſultry climates the clearing of woods, the cultivation of ſugar, rice, and tobacco, require labours which, the planters affirm, none but negroes can perform. For this purpoſe an annual cargo of Africans is neceſſary, and in the year 1771. forty-ſeven thouſand, one hundred and forty-ſix were exported, and of theſe the Liverpool merchants carried more than twenty-nine thouſand. The direct produce of theſe, on a moderate computation, amounts to one million and a half ſterling, and the indirect advantages which Britain derives from their labours in the plantations are beyond computation.

Gradually to emancipate the preſent ſlaves and to convert them into a yeomanry, and to ſupply future labourers without violence, are two deſirables of infinite conſequence; but the difficulty of effecting theſe ends is far beyond the comprehenſion of thoſe who have only private and partial information: however, it may be believed they are both within the reach of legiſlature, with ample indemnity to the planters, and without diminution to the ſtate; but by what means muſt be left, as it ought to be, to parliamentary wiſdom. Mean time ſeveral conſiderations encourage people to hope that this great evil will in due courſe be removed.

The total abolition of proper and abſolute ſlavery hath been effected in feudal ſtates, as England and France, without any inconvenience, and with innumerable advantages. Why ſhould not the ſame effects proceed from the ſame cauſe in the plantations? Would not free negroes properly treated propagate their ſpecies in the plantations as well as on the coaſt of Guinea? A growth of negroes would render importation unneceſſary.

The

The Spaniards have made trial of a gradual enfranchiſement of their ſlaves, and no ill conſequences have followed. At the Havannah the purchaſer of a ſlave is obliged by law to enter the name and the price of the ſlave in a publick regiſter, to allow him one day in every week to work for himſelf, beſide Sundays. The earnings of this day, if he chooſe to work, are ſecured to him by law, and as ſoon as he is able to purchaſe another day the maſter is obliged to ſell it to him at the price of one fifth of his original coſt, and ſo likewiſe the remaining four days at the ſame rate as ſoon as the ſlave is able to redeem them, after which he is abſolutely free.

Some gentlemen have made trials ſimilar to this in the main in the Britiſh plantations with great ſucceſs, and the Americans are daily experiencing the good effects of their efforts to the ſame purpoſe. What ſhould hinder others from imitating examples good in themſelves, and ſucceſsful in the iſſue?

Some of the beſt informed commercial writers in Europe affirm that the ſlave trade obſtructs another trade better than itſelf: that Africa is the beſt ſituated for commerce of any other quarter of the world: that from Port-Sallee to the cape of Good Hope is an extent of about three thouſand leagues of coaſt: that its rivers are of the firſt magnitude, as the Nile and Nubia on the north ſhore, which fall into the Mediterranean, the Niger which empties itſelf into the Atlantick on the weſt, the Congo, the Zairi, and the Loango, ſouth of the line, which fall into the Ethiopick ocean on the weſt ſide, beyond the gold coaſt, the Natal, the Prio St. Eſprit, the Melinda, and the Mozambo, which empty themſelves into the Indian ocean on the eaſt ſide of Africa: that the country is populous beyond credibility, and that if proper meaſures were purſued a greater quantity of European produce and manufactures might be exported thither than to any other country in the whole world: that there are rich mines of gold and ſilver, and the fineſt copper in the world: that many parts, and particularly the banks of the rivers near the gold coaſt and the ſlave coaſt are capable of the beſt cultivation, a temperate, fertile, healthy and manageable ſoil; that cinnamon, tea, coffee,

fee, ſpices, ginger, cotton, rice, pepper, fuſtic and indigo have ſome of them thriven to admiration, and all might do ſo by proper management: that wheat and barley are in plenty and perfection: that the woods abound with valuable timber, rich fruits, and precious gums: that there are camels, horſes, elephants, and almoſt all ſorts of beaſts: that ivory, hides, wax, ebony, feathers, ſulphur, civet, ſalt petre, emeralds, aloes, and a thouſand other articles of traffick abound in the immenſe kingdoms of Africa: and that at the entrance of the rivers into the ſea there are excellent harbours, deep, ſafe, calm, covered from the wind, and capable of being made ſecure by fortifications. Theſe are not reveries of landlopers, but true facts reported by ſeamen and merchants from actual obſervation of the coaſt, and the African iſlands, Madagaſcar, St. Helens, Cape Verd, the Canary and the reſt: and they add, that the numerous emoluments of African commerce are capable of amazing augmentation: that ſuch augmentation is very practicable: that the treaſures of Africa are inexhauſtible: that nothing which could be cultivated there could poſſibly interfere with the produce of Britain: that the amount of African trade muſt be eſteemed ſo much clear profit to the nation: and that nothing but the SLAVE-TRADE obſtructs all this.

The Dutch have humanized the ſavages of the ſpice iſlands, who were as barbarous as the African negroes, and it was a maxim with them to attach the natives to themſelves by proffered advantages of traffick more than by force of arms, which they never uſed but to preſerve the dominion they had acquired by commerce. The mighty power of the Dutch in the Eaſt Indies originally ſprang from a very ſmall beginning. Nine merchants of Amſterdam ſubſcribed 70,000 guilders, fitted out four ſhips, which ſailed from the Texel 1595, and founded the Dutch Eaſt India company, whoſe extent of territory and immenſe riches are known only to themſelves. It is the ſlave trade that prevents the Europeans from forming ſimilar ſettlements in Africa, for it is impoſſible to conciliate the Africans while we ſtir up wars among the

negro

negro princes for the ſake of making captives of each other for ſale.

The hiſtory of the South Sea Company, and the Aſſiento exhibit a contraſt to the Dutch proſperity in the Eaſt. The Spaniards, having in a manner deſtroyed the natives of Spaniſh America, and having no ſettlements on the coaſt of Africa, are obliged to contract with foreigners for an annual ſupply of negro ſlaves to work their gold and ſilver mines. The contract hath paſſed through ſeveral hands. The Genoeſe firſt engaged in it, but they made nothing of it. The French ſucceeded them, and ſeemed to flouriſh a while, but in the end they were ſufferers. Then the Engliſh South Sea Company obtained the contract, and undertook to furniſh 4,800 negroes a year, for thirty years: but the company, like the former Aſſientiſts, gained no advantages, worſe than former contractors they could not fulfil their engagements, and the contract haſtened their ruin. That freemen may be engaged to work in mines; that free negroes may be induced to labour under the line; and that Europeans, if not wrought too hard, may be prevailed on to work in the plantations, are poſitions in conteſtible with many: and if they be granted, it follows that the ſlave trade is a gratification of the ambition and avarice of a few at the expence of the general proſperity of commercial kingdoms, and the natural rights of millions of the human ſpecies. Do the millions of negroes in bondage ever kneel down, claſp their hands, and with dripping eyes look upward? Great being! with what eyes doſt thou behold them!